

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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USIE-00 INRE-00 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /063 W
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O R 241637Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 836
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3537

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF SENIOR PCI OFFICIAL

1. DURING A BRIEF FEBRUARY 24 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY DIRECTORATE MEMBER LUCIANO BARCA, WHO HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE CURRENT INTER-PARTY DISCUSSIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF A PROGRAM FOR A NEW GOVERNMENT, EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE ANDREOTTI WOULD FORMALLY AGREE BY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1 TO PROCEED WITH THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. THE BASIS FOR ANDREOTTI'S ACTION, ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, WOULD BE AN AGREEMENT ON A PROGRAM FOR A NEW GOVERNMENT AND ON THE FORMATION OF AN EXPLICIT AND RECOGNIZED PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. BARCA ADDED THAT A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY AND A POLITICAL COALITION BETWEEN PARTIES, THE BASIS FOR WHICH DOES NOT NOW EXIST. HE ESTIMATED THAT ONCE ANDREOTTI INFORMS PRESIDENT LEONE OF HIS ABILITY TO PROCEED, IT WOULD TAKE ANOTHER WEEK TO TEN DAYS TO CONSTITUTE FORMALLY A NEW GOVERNMENT.

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2. BARCA NOTED THAT THE WORK ON THE FORMATION OF THE PROGRAM IS NOW APPROACHING A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION. THE MAJOR OBSTACLES ARE IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC SECURITY AND INVOLVE THE QUESTIONS OF THE UNIONIZATION OF THE POLICE AND THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES. HOWEVER, BARCA WAS RELATIVELY CONFIDENT THAT

EVEN THESE OBSTACLES COULD BE OVERCOME.

3. CONTINUING, BARCA STATED THAT ANDREOTTI'S ONLY OTHER ALTERNATIVE NEXT WEEK WOULD BE TO RENOUNCE HIS MANDATE TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. THE COMMUNIST OFFICIAL FELT THAT POLITICAL REALITY WOULD LEAD THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS NOT TO PERMIT THIS TO HAPPEN SINCE THE ONLY REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO GO TO EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS WITH A GOVERNMENT LED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF A LAY PARTY. THIS WOULD BE A DEVELOPMENT WHICH BARCA BELIEVES THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WOULD WISH TO AVOID AT ALL COSTS. BARCA VIRTUALLY RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE FORMATION OF A NON-POLITICAL GOVERNMENT OF TECHNICIANS LED BY AMINTORE FANFANI AS PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE. HE FELT THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO GIVE MORE NEGOTIATING LEEWAY TO FANFANI THAN IT HAS ALREADY GIVEN TO ANDREOTTI UNLESS IT WISHED TO CREATE AN EXPLOSIVE REACTION WITHIN ITS PARLIAMENTARY RANKS.GARDNER

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